



Waterfront News

City of Norfolk
Department of Utilities

Summer 2006

Dear Lakefront Resident:

I am writing to introduce myself to you as the City of Norfolk's Reservoir Manager. You've received this newsletter because your neighborhood lake is also a drinking water reservoir, which is managed by the City of Norfolk's Department of Utilities. That means that the water that comes out of your tap could have started as water in your lake. This newsletter has three goals:

- To introduce myself and the Norfolk Department of Utilities as a resource to you for lake-related information and issues.
- To explain how Norfolk manages the drinking water reservoirs to provide safe drinking water to 800,000 Hampton Roads residents and businesses; and
- To show you ways to preserve and protect this precious resource.

Along with the many benefits of lake-front living come some special responsibilities of environmental stewardship that most water-lovers are happy to take on. The City of Norfolk is a regional water purveyor, supplying drinking water to customers in Norfolk, Virginia Beach, portions of Chesapeake, and on all of the Department of Defense installations in southside Hampton Roads. Norfolk protects the water quality within the lakes so that we can provide the highest quality drinking water to all of our customers, now and well into the future. As a lakefront resident, you can assist in maintaining water quality. In fact, you can have a tremendous impact on the health of our waterways. This newsletter will provide some useful information on how, together, we can protect our water quality. If you have any questions related to the drinking water reservoirs, please call us at (757) 441-5678.

Sincerely,

David S. Rosenthal, CLM

Lakefront Construction and Landscaping

The City of Norfolk owns some of the land surrounding the reservoirs. The amount of land Norfolk owns could be as little as ten feet from the waters edge to over 100 feet. If you would like to landscape the property or clear the property of nuisance vegetation, please call us first. Consider us as another neighbor that happens to be in your backyard. We're more than just a neighbor, we're a resource.

If you are interested in building a bulkhead, pier, fence or similar structure on city property, you need an Encroachment Permit from the City of Norfolk, a building permit from your locality (city or county), and possibly a permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers. There is no cost for Norfolk's Encroachment Permit and we will be glad to meet with you to discuss your project.

If you aren't sure if you need a permit or would like more information please call us at (757) 441-5678 or visit our website at: <http://www.norfolk.gov/utilities/resources/>.



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- Tree removals
- Maintaining a healthy lawn while protecting water quality
- Fishing and boating on the reservoirs
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Removing Fallen & Leaning Trees

Each year, trees fall into the lakes or onto City property around the shoreline. Should either of the following conditions exist, please call us. The City may remove the tree if:

1. The city has been notified of a threat, which may pose a significant risk. The classic example involves a tree leaning toward a structure (e.g., a house), and there is reason to believe the tree will fall and cause structural damage to buildings and/or injury to people.

2. A tree has fallen over and appears to

pose a significant threat to a water supply route or drainage course. This can occur when a tree falls across a relatively narrow cove or canal. The tree, if left in place, could catch trash and debris and cause a blockage to water flow.

If you're not sure, give us a call and we can come out and take a look.



“Virginia Soils are naturally high in phosphorus—enough to support a healthy lawn” Virginia Cooperative Extension

Fertilizer; Your Lawn and the Lake

Fertilizer that runs off of lawns and into lakes can lead to algae blooms and cause other harmful vegetation overgrowth in water. Please use fertilizer sparingly. Your lawn may need much less fertilizer than you think. The general rule—don't exceed one pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of lawn in a single application. After all, you can always fertilize again later if necessary. Before adding anything to your lawn, get a soil test. They are simple and inexpensive. Contact your local Cooperative Extension Office for more information on soil test kits.

Use a low or no-phosphorus fertilizer formula. Typical Virginia soils have enough phosphorus to support a healthy lawn. Also, look for a low phosphorus-to-

nitrogen ratio. A high percentage of the nitrogen should be water insoluble. This means that the fertilizer continues to release slowly despite the presence of water. Even if it washes into the reservoir, it does not become immediately available to plant life.

Fertilizer analysis is often described by using three numbers, such as 12-4-8 or 46-0-0. These three numbers indicate, respectively, the percentage of weight of nitrogen (N), phosphate (P_2O_3), and potash (K_2O) in the fertilizer. Also, the ratio of these numbers is important. If the fertilizer analysis is 16-4-8, the fertilizer ratio is 4-1-2; similarly, a 14-7-14 analysis would have a 2-1-2 ratio. Mature lawns generally require more nitrogen than phosphorus and potassium; therefore, ratios of 4-1-2 and 4-1-3 are appropriate.



Erosion Control for Shoreline Protection

Are you interested in protecting the shoreline in your backyard? If you are considering taking an erosion control measure, please contact us. We would like to help you accomplish this project. Please do not place items such as grass trimmings, leaves, or tree limbs along embankments, as these materials do not protect the shoreline and can actually pollute water quality. Such materials add nutrients to the lake, contributing to algae growth and potential taste and odor problems in your drinking water. This also creates habitat for muskrats that may burrow under your yard, causing other landscaping problems.

If you would like to stabilize the shoreline next to your property, we have several options to assist you. The City currently allows the installation of bulkheads and rip rap revetments with the appropriate permits. We also encourage other methods, such as planting native vegetation.

If you have questions and would like more information on options or permits, you can call us at (757) 441-5678 or check our web site at <http://www.norfolk.gov/utilities/resources/>.





Fishing and Boating

Using the Norfolk Reservoirs for recreation has been very popular since the reservoirs were created in 1873. Since that time, the City has established guidelines and regulations for fishing and boating to protect the reservoir water quality and the surrounding property. The reservoirs provide an excellent resource for recreation. Following a few reservoir rules, we can enjoy these waterways responsibly and protect water quality.

Some rules to know:

- The reservoirs and surrounding properties are open from sunrise to sunset.
- There is no fishing from shore except at designated areas at the fishing stations. However, if you have a pier, you may fish from your pier with a valid fishing license.

- Everyone must comply with state regulations for boating and fishing. This includes having a valid fishing license and all safety equipment.
- All boats must have a City of Norfolk boat permit, including canoes and kayaks. The permits are available at 400 Granby Street in Norfolk and several satellite locations in Virginia Beach and Suffolk. Check our website at <http://www.norfolk.gov/utilities/resources> for location information.
- Boats with operational motors up to 12 h.p. are allowed in the reservoirs. You can also use a canoe or kayak. Sorry, but no inflatables, houseboats or personal water craft, such as jet skis are permissible in the lakes.
- Fish can be caught by rod and reel only. Netting is not allowed.

For a complete listing of all of the reservoir use regulations, you can visit your local library, call us at (757) 441-5678, or visit our website at <http://www.norfolk.gov/utilities/resources>.



Pollution Prevention

Pollution can come from many sources and it can enter the reservoirs. Certain livestock, such as horses, cows and goats, as well as your house pets (dogs and cats) have the potential to contaminate waterways. It is very important that these animals be kept out of the reservoirs and more importantly, that their fecal material, or waste, is not allowed to enter the water. Waste from mammals has the potential to carry disease-causing organisms, which can contaminate drinking water.

But what about all of the birds, like ducks and Canada geese? These animals can also contribute bacteria to the lake, but these types of bacteria are destroyed during the disinfection process at the water treatment plants.

For everyone's health, don't dispose of any animal droppings in or near the reservoirs, and if you have livestock, restrict the animals from entering the water.

In addition, almost all of us use household items that have the potential to pollute water quality. These are things like yard waste (grass, leaves, tree limbs), fertilizers, and motor oil. When working in the yard or garden, keep fertilizer, pesticides, and other chemical use to a minimum. Excess chemicals may wash into the lake or nearby storm drain. These chemicals harm the plants and animals in the lake and may create

water treatment difficulties.

Yard waste, such as grass, leaves and limbs, do not work well to protect the shoreline from erosion. Once placed on the waters edge, they will decay and tend to wash into the lake. When they wash away, the lake may become more shallow near the shore and give off an odor. Composting is a great way to reuse yard waste. Otherwise, you can place grass and leaves in clear plastic bags on the curb and the City will dispose of them for you if you have curbside pickup.

It is a Class One Misdemeanor in Norfolk to pour or place anything into a storm drain or the reservoirs. Allowing motor oil or antifreeze to wash off of driveways into storm drains can be deadly to animals. Fluids from your automobile should be collected and taken to a local gas station or auto parts store where it can be disposed of, often recycled, at no charge

If you have any questions about pollution prevention, yard waste disposal or shoreline protection, please call us at (757) 441-5678 or visit our web site at <http://www.norfolk.gov/utilities/resources>.

Norfolk Police Protecting Your Investment

We are fortunate to have several Norfolk Police officers routinely patrolling the City's reservoirs. They make sure the reservoirs are used in a safe manner while protecting the water quality. The police routinely check for appropriate permits like City boat permit, State fishing license and make sure that all safety equipment is on board and in good condition. The Norfolk Department of Utilities is at your service 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Call 441-5678 if you have any questions.





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PROTECT IT

When it comes to protecting Norfolk's reservoir system, we're all in this together. Our actions around the reservoirs have an impact on the water quality in the lakes.

The area that drains into a body of water is called a *watershed*. A watershed also drains into the ground, affecting groundwater wells. Remember that water doesn't enter the lake just through backyards. Anything you do in your driveway, on the street and in the front yard can also affect the lake. Don't place grass, leaves, used motor oil and other fluids in the storm water system. These ditches and pipes are the fastest route to the lake. Also, if you have a septic system, please pump out regularly and watch for any wet spots in the yard that might indicate a problem with your drainage field. Thank you for being a water quality steward.

Remember—***your lake water becomes your tap water.***

